



NGOs' ROLE IN WOMEN EMPOWERMENT IN CASE OF GUJARAT STATE

Mr. Bharat M. Patel

I/c Principal, NGES MSW College, Patan, Gujarat, India.

ABSTRACT

Women's empowerment has been a major topic in recent years. Women's empowerment promotes long-term rural development by improving women's economic, social, and political position in India. To transform an idle culture into a self-sustaining society, women must be empowered in these areas. Women's empowerment can be achieved by providing enough educational opportunities, political backing, and a competent legal system, as well as creating jobs for women. Here, non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and self-help groups (SHGs) play a critical role in women's empowerment by providing basic education, vocational training, self-employment training, legal aid, women's protection, and self-awareness programmes. As a result, they are primarily concerned with the advancement of women in society. This article examines the fluidity of the process in Gujarat by which women's empowerment and status are improved through the use of non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and self-help groups. This study discusses rural women's empowerment through NGOs, as well as the benefits of entrepreneurship for rural women. This research aims to investigate various policy options for positioning rural women as equal partners in entrepreneurship and economic growth.

KEYWORDS: Women Empowerment, Sustainable Rural Development, NGO, Self Help Groups.

INTRODUCTION:

This paper is founded on the fact that a nation's economy can only be enhanced if the citizens' quality of life can be effectively improved by boosting the living standards of people on the street and in backward areas. In India, as in many other developing countries, women play a critical role in the nation's development on many levels, including social, political, economic, and legal. Control over material possessions, intellectual resources, and ideology, as well as the ability to get what one wants and influence people on one's issues, are all examples of empowerment. Women's empowerment encompasses their lives on numerous levels, including the family, community, market, and state. The issue of women's empowerment, as well as their status and position, has now become crucial to human rights-based development initiatives. To transform an idle culture into a self-sustaining society, women must be empowered in social, political, economic, and legal dimensions.

Women's empowerment can be achieved through political power, education, employment, non-governmental organisations, and self-help groups. NGO and SHG organisations are the most common, and women's empowerment achievement must occur on numerous levels, including economic, sociocultural, familial/interpersonal, legal, political, and psychological. Women may be empowered inside one of these sub-domains because these dimensions encompass such a vast variety of characteristics. Since 1999, the Human Development Report has shown that virtually no country in the world treats its women equally to men in terms of life expectancy, wealth, and education. According to S. Mukhopadhyay's study, the female labour participation rate in Uttar Pradesh is 11 percent, with a gender disparity of 52 percent, which is comparable to West Bengal but lower than Punjab. Women work in community service at 56 percent, manufacturing at 17 percent, and agriculture at 8.6 percent in rural areas. Only 4% of women work in the formal sector, compared to 10% of men.

LITERATURE REVIEW:

In order to investigate the role of non-governmental organisations (NGOs) in women's empowerment, the following literature was reviewed:

Collier et al., 1998. Since the 1980s, the Indian government has demonstrated a growing interest for women's issues by enacting a slew of legislation boosting women's education and political engagement.

International agencies such as the World Bank and the United Nations have also focused on women's issues, particularly the empowerment of disadvantaged women in rural regions (Narayan, 2002; Sadik, 1988). Nongovernmental organisations (NGOs) have been tackling the underlying causes of deprivation through the promotion of economic and social empowerment since the late 1980s and early 1990s, moving beyond the traditional focus of women's health and education.

(1995, Dhillon & Hansra). In our country, voluntary organisations are not a new concept. Volunteerism has long played a significant role in our culture and social tradition. The importance of forming approved associations, as well as their involvement and participation in rural development, is now widely acknowledged. They have grown in number, prominence, and significance in recent years, and have set up numerous new experiments in the field of rural develop-

ment. Because they are close to the thoughts and hearts of rural people, voluntary organisations can play a critical role in rural development by augmenting government efforts. They are rooted in the community and can successfully respond to the community's needs and goals. They have the opportunity to try out novel ways to rural development.

(Ahsan Ullah, p. 21 in Ahsan Ullah, 2003). NGO initiatives, according to the literature, contribute to women's empowerment in a beneficial way. This paper focuses on the role of non-governmental organisations (NGOs) in Gujarat.

Rowlands (1995); Oxaal and Baden (1997); Hainard and Verschuur (2001) have demonstrated that women's empowerment is primarily a bottom-up process rather than a top-down strategy. Zimmerman claims to be correct.

Individual empowerment, according to Rappaport (1988), is defined as the ability of individuals to gain control over their social, political, economic, and psychological lives through access to information, knowledge, and skills, decision-making, and individual self-efficacy, community participation, and perceived control.

Rowlands (1997), Rowlands (1997), Rowlands (1997), Rowlands (1997), Row Women's empowerment techniques to discovering effective ways to help them and enable them to mobilise for change originate from inside them, not from without. Individuals working together to accomplish a greater impact than they could have achieved alone is referred to as collective empowerment. In fact, collective empowerment is inextricably linked to personal empowerment, as it is difficult for an individual to be active collectively without personal empowerment. Working together, participating in NGO programmes, and raising community awareness are all examples of community empowerment. Working together refers to persons who want to collaborate with others in a variety of settings in order to share their skills and expertise.

(Agbola 1994) [1], the concept of participation in NGO's programme refers to participation in NGOs' programmes aimed at improving community conditions. Community awareness, on the other hand, relates to women's understanding of their role and condition in the home, community, and society. NGOs are private, non-profit, non-governmental organisations that are funded by individual and corporate donations, membership dues, and grants from international agencies and governments.

OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY:

- To investigate the many lessons learned and issues encountered by NGOs during the women's empowerment initiative in Gujarat.
- To investigate the role of non-governmental organisations (NGOs) in the process of women empowerment in Gujarat.
- To investigate the strategic roles that non-governmental organisations (NGOs) play in assisting women in gaining access to information for their development.
- To investigate the various strategies employed by NGO's in Gujarat to

empower women.

Overview of Women Empowerment:

Women are socially, economically, and politically marginalised, despite accounting for half of humanity. Empowerment can take several forms, depending on the characteristics that characterise a lack of authority within the current institutional structure. National governments, non-governmental groups, and international organisations have all been aware of and concerned about the situation of women for decades. These organisations have worked to improve women's literacy, nutrition, and health, as well as their ability to earn money. Empowerment, according to Mayoux (1998), is a process of internal change, or power within, augmentation of capabilities, or power to, and collective mobilisation of women, and when possible, men, for the purpose of questioning and changing gender subordination, or power over. As a result, self-confidence and self-esteem play a crucial role in this transformation. Participation in a non-governmental organization's (NGO) programme refers to participation in programmes conducted by NGOs to better the community's position.

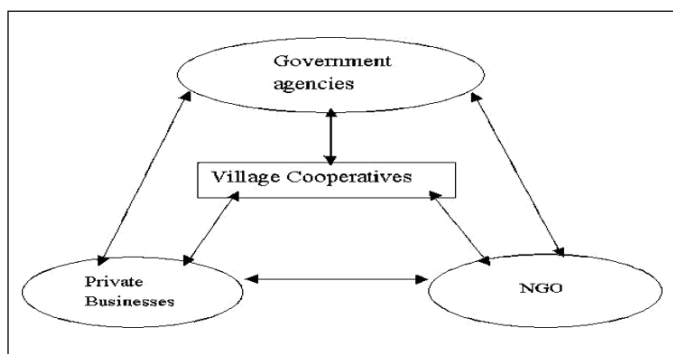
Non-government Organisation (NGO):

Any non-profit, volunteer citizens' group organised on a local, national, or worldwide level is referred to as a non-governmental organisation (NGO). NGOs undertake a variety of service and humanitarian roles, bring citizen concerns to governments, promote and monitor policies, and stimulate political engagement through the supply of information. They are task-oriented and motivated by people with a shared interest. Some are centred on a single issue, such as human rights, the environment, or health. They provide research and knowledge, act as early warning systems, and assist in the monitoring and implementation of international accords. Their relationship with United Nations offices and organisations varies depending on their goals, location, and mandate of a given institution. Some NGOs that help with impoverished women are particularly interested in promoting employment. The phrase "nonprofit organisation" is normally reserved for organisations that pursue broader social goals with political overtones but are not explicitly political.

Structure of Self Help Group (SHG):

The SHG provides a platform for social intermediation, allowing women to obtain the capacity and entitlement to control their own lives, create their own agendas, learn new skills, solve difficulties, and build autonomy (Meenai, 2003). Self-help helps people in rural areas with their financial needs, ensuring that unemployed and low-income persons have a higher chance of finding work and starting their own businesses.

The ideal size of an SHG is 10 to 20 members.



Only one person comes from a single family (More families can join SHGs this way) The gang is either entirely made up of guys or entirely made up of women. (Mixed groups aren't recommended in most cases.)

Women's organisations consistently outperform men's groupings. Compulsory attendance. Members share the same social and socioeconomic background. In India, the National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD) is a prominent player in aiding banks and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) involved in microfinance initiatives.

The member of SHG's may exhibit the following outputs, resulting from their activities:

Literacy and numeracy skills acquisition; Basic legal rights awareness; project and state development activities awareness; Electoral process, sociological analysis, and gender concerns; critical political consciousness

Increased social position, as judged by oneself and others; Liberation from exploitation by money lenders, landlords, and others;

Active participation in the establishment of groups and other political bodies, such as Panchayats; ensuring literacy and education for girls; health awareness; reorganising women's time; and increased decision-making power inside the household. The figure below depicts the structure within which government agencies, village cooperatives, private businesses, and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) collaborate in a village to promote rural development.

Functional areas of SHG's:

The following are the main functions of SHGs:

Members should take an active role in all of the organization's activities, and they should be responsible for their own funds.

These funds could be made available to members as a loan. Everything to do with money should be chosen by the group.

Meetings should be held in order for members to openly communicate their problems in order to fix them.

National Policy for the Empowerment of Women (2001):

The Indian Constitution not only guarantees women's equality, but also authorises the government to take affirmative discrimination measures in their favour. There has been a noticeable shift in the approach to women's issues from welfare to development since the Fifth Five Year Plan (1974-78). In recent years, women's empowerment has been recognised as a critical factor in defining their status.

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES OF THE POLICY:

The policy's purpose is to promote women's advancement, development, and empowerment. The Policy will be extensively distributed in order to stimulate active participation from all stakeholders in order to achieve its objectives. The policy's specific goals are to create an environment conducive to women's full development through favourable economic and social policies, allowing them to reach their full potential.

In all domains – political, economic, social, cultural, and civil – de jure and de facto enjoyment of all human rights and fundamental freedoms by women on an equal footing with men.

Equal access to women in social, political, and economic life, including health care, excellent education at all levels, career and vocational advice, employment, equal remuneration, occupational health and safety, social security, and public office, among other things.

Strengthening legal structures in order to eliminate all forms of gender discrimination.

Active participation and involvement of both men and women in changing society attitudes and community behaviours.

Gender equality is being incorporated into the development process.

Discrimination and all forms of violence against women and girls must be eradicated;

Partnerships with civil society, particularly women's organisations, are being built and strengthened.

Partnership with the Voluntary Sector Organizations:

All policies and programmes affecting women will be formulated, implemented, monitored, and reviewed with the participation of voluntary organisations, associations, federations, trade unions, non-governmental organisations, women's organisations, and institutions dealing with education, training, and research. To that purpose, they will be given sufficient support in terms of resources and capacity building, as well as the opportunity to participate actively in women's empowerment processes.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY:

For the aim of this study article, the researcher used secondary data. NGO manuals, yearly general reports of NGOs and SHG's, journals, newspapers, and related websites are the main sources of secondary data.

Roles and Functions of NGOs:

Women Empowerment has been the central agenda for both government and NGO's. Voluntary action promoted by voluntary agencies engaged in development play a significant role at the grass roots level in the regions of Gujarat for the success of rural development which is dependent upon the active participation of the people through Non-Government Organizations (NGO). The various roles of NGOs are described below for better understanding:-

Educating the Rural Women:

- Supplementation of Government Efforts

- Efforts Organizing the Rural Women

Building various Model and Experiment:

- Ensure Women's Participation in their empowerment mobilizing the optimum Resources

Promoting Rural Leadership:

Representing the Rural Women:

- Promoting Technology in Rural areas Activating the Rural Delivery System

- Providing effective & efficient Training to Rural Women.
- Monitoring and Evaluation. Impact assessment.
- Planning and Implementation.

CONCLUSION:

In Gujarat, NGOs have a tremendous impact on women. Women's lifestyles and living standards change dramatically after they join NGO's. Women have begun to earn money, becoming self-sufficient and self-motivated. They can make their own decisions in various situations and offer advice on family affairs. The study discovered considerable differences in NGOs' efforts to deploy interventional approaches in the health sector and to improve women's literacy levels. However, despite NGO efforts in the field of women's empowerment, the situation must be changed at the highest level. Women's empowerment is aided by NGOs and SHGs. According to the findings, only a small fraction of people from the backward classes actively engage in gramme sabha meetings and are involved in the decision-making process. According to a review of the literature, NGOs are beneficial to women's capacity building and social mobilisation in Gujarat.

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